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Dr. Fisher's discussion of the subject of the utility of each commodity as a function of all other commodities in the market contains some hints at a theory of consumption, especially with reference to individual consumption for maximum satisfaction, one of the four great departments into which a complete theory of consumption will have to be divided for investigation and discussion.

From the movement of the point of tangency of the line tangent to an "indifference curve" (the locus of points representing all the possible consumption combinations, of a definite total utility, that can be formed from a given number of commodities), the writer draws a conclusion of great importance for social welfare in the distribution of wealth. He says: "If the poor consumers predominate, the line AB [the tangent to the indifference curve] will follow the general trend of the curves near the origin. If the rich consumers predominate, the line AB will become steeper. That is, the prices of the two qualities [of the same article] separate widely.

"This interprets the fact that in a rich market like New York City a slight difference in quality will make an enormous divergence in price, while in some country towns different grades either do not exist or sell for nearly the same price." An obvious inference is that greatly unequal distribution of wealth tends to put articles of superior quality more and more beyond the reach of poor consumers.

In view of the success of his present effort, it is to be hoped that Dr. Fisher will push still further his application of the higher mathematics to economic investigation.

The appendices contain some matter of value, interpreting the "failure" of some of the equations, discussing the limitations of the mathematical method and giving an outline of its history. Jevons' list of mathematico-economic writers is brought down to date, forming a valuable bibliography.

DAVID KINLEY.

An Introduction to the Study of the Dependent, Defective and Delinquent Classes. By C. R. HENDERSON, A. M., D. D. Pp. 277. Boston: D. C. Heath & Co. 1893.

Mr. Henderson has endeavored to give us a book suitable for class use, thus anticipating a want which, though hardly felt as yet, is certain to develop rapidly in the near future. If so many college students still study the sociology of Rome and Athens, and neglect that of New York and their own township, it is largely because the nearer life is less accessible for lack of books and guidance. To the

live, nineteenth century student, social problems of to-day are not less profitable or less interesting than "gossip about kings."

The author thus suggests his qualifications for the work: "If more than twenty-two years of almost daily contact with the poor in an attempt to help them by personal, parish, institutional and governmental means; if constant study of the greatest writers in medical, sanitary, economic, ethical, religious, political and social science; if long journeys for research in many towns and cities, in America and in Europe; if years of converse and discussion, and correspondence with wise and generous men and women over these themes; if constant experience as an organizer, administrator, trustee and director of important charities; if all this entitles one to offer a humble contribution" etc. The list is an imposing one, but the book seems to justify it.

No part of the subject is neglected and numberless quotations from a great variety of authors, all perfectly pigeon-holed in measured and conspicuously labeled paragraphs, testify to the author's amazing erudition. It is plain, too, that his knowledge is not confined to reading, but that his is a familiarity due in part, at least, to personal contact with the facts he considers.

Such a book cannot fail to be valuable, but it can and does fail to be a great book, or a good one. Having admitted that there is a need of such a book and that it embodies great learning and care, even a certain pronounced system of arrangement, it becomes difficult to urge objections, especially when those objections are as intangible as they are fundamental. A man may know all the details of a subject and not know the subject; he may have familiarity without grasp, erudition without mastery. It is not enough that a book be orderly and symmetrical in the arrangement of its material; it must be organic; there must be vital dependence of part on part. Without this there is no unity or cumulative power. The book has the weakness of eclecticism. No two things are more fundamentally unlike or more easily confounded than non-committal eclecticism and judicial personality. It is the former which, in a measure, characterizes this book. We feel, after reading it, that it has told us many things, but has left us to do much of that which is an author's real work, namely, interpret facts. We do not forget that this is peculiarly difficult in the subject in question and that a satisfactory book is perhaps impossible at present. But if the spirit moves any one else to try, let him not desist through fear that the work is accomplished.

H. H. POWERS.